Municipal Affairs

Business Plan 1999-2000 to 2001-02

Accountability Statement

This Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 1999 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the Government Accountability Act and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at February 18, 1999 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.

Iris Evans
Minister of Municipal Affairs
February 22, 1999

Mission

Municipal Affairs helps ensure public confidence in local government, basic shelter for those most in need, and a fair marketplace. Municipal Affairs also guarantees high-quality registry information and accessible service for Albertans and is committed to effectiveness and affordability in the delivery of these services.

Introduction

Alberta has one of the most vibrant economies in Canada. With this growth comes opportunities and challenges for Albertans, as well as added pressures on Municipal Affairs' core businesses. This business plan is a summary of these pressures and the Ministry's response to them.

Commitment to Leadership for Municipalities
All municipalities are struggling to meet the challenges of change, particularly with an increased demand for services and infrastructure. Increasingly, municipalities look to the Ministry for leadership in developing dynamic communities and advocating the role of local government. Building on a foundation of a responsive and accountable tax policy and effective legislation, the Ministry will work with municipalities to help strengthen their contribution to their citizens' quality of life.

Strategic Response to Housing Pressures
The Alberta Advantage has attracted many people to the province. As well, an aging population will continue to put pressure on the supply of affordable housing. This combination of economic and demographic factors is having an impact on the housing and rental markets in Alberta. Rental vacancy rates across the province have been declining in recent years, with some high-growth communities having rental vacancy rates below one percent. Low vacancies not only make it difficult for new residents to find a place to live, but they also contribute to rising rents in existing apartments.

The Ministry is taking the lead role to develop a new housing policy to help local communities respond to the demands of a growing and changing population, reduce the incidence of child poverty in Alberta, and improve the overall quality of life for Albertans. The Ministry will work together with seven other provincial ministries that deliver housing programs to ensure resources are allocated in an effective way that allows us to provide assistance to people who genuinely cannot help themselves. Each community has unique challenges which require flexible solutions that are best accomplished through partnerships.

A Fair Marketplace for Albertans
The significant growth in Alberta's economy has resulted in an increased number of consumer issues, particularly in the areas of home renovations and landlord/tenant complaints. The Ministry is working towards putting an effective legislative and regulatory framework in place to ensure a fair marketplace for Alberta businesses and consumers. The Ministry will continue to strengthen relationships with other jurisdictions to deal with increasing cross-border transactions that result in consumer losses.

Increased Demands on Registries' Systems
The demand for Registries' products and services continues to increase, particularly in the area of land and motor vehicle transactions. Revenues increased by $21.7 million or 8.6 percent in 1997-98.

Continued growth is expected and will put increased demands on the existing systems. Additional pressures come from Albertans' expectations of high quality and convenient service. Reinvestment in Registries' systems will be needed to meet these challenges and to successfully adopt new and innovative ways of doing business.

Key Directions

Government Goals	The Ministry's activities will support the government's goals for the benefit of all Albertans and Alberta's communities.
Accountability	The Ministry's accountability framework will guide those agencies delivering services for the Ministry.
Partnerships	The Ministry will establish, where appropriate, partnerships for more effective and cost-efficient service delivery.
Communications	The Ministry will ensure good communication with its customers and partners and maintain strong working relationships.
Flexible Solutions	Service models will target areas of greatest need and will be flexible to encourage innovation, cost efficiency and meeting customer needs.

The majority of the strategies in this business plan support the recommendations of the Growth Summit and are identified by an asterisk. The strategies also support government goals, cross-government initiatives, and goals and strategies in other ministries' business plans and/or joint business plans such as the Business Plan for Alberta's Children.

Cross-Government Initiatives

Albertans benefit when departments work together to provide programs and services. While each of the Ministry's four core businesses have their own specific goals and strategies, many involve initiatives that require consultation and/or direct involvement with other ministries. Some of the more significant cross-government initiatives include:

Initiatives where Municipal Affairs plays a Lead Role:

Municipal-Provincial Roles and Responsibilities
Municipal Affairs and Justice will begin a new initiative in 1999-2000, which will clarify the relationship between municipalities and the province. In 2000-2001, a formal consultation process commences among the province, municipalities and other stakeholders with the goal of a renewed partnership for the 21st century.

Alberta School Foundation Fund - Property Tax Requisition Component
Property taxes are a major source of school funding — $1.3 billion annually. Municipal Affairs provides leadership in the administration of the requisitioning component of the Alberta School Foundation Fund in conjunction with Education and Treasury. Each year, the Ministry calculates the

amount each municipality must collect from property taxpayers. The amount requisitioned is based on equalized assessments calculated by the Ministry for each municipality.

The Alberta Capital Region Governance Review
The Minister has started an innovative discussion process with 20 Alberta Capital Region municipalities on how to achieve future excellence in local governance in the Capital Region. In support of this process, an interdepartmental committee will undertake a comprehensive review of how the province can support the Capital Region's partnership, process, and decisions for improvement in the future.

Enhanced Interdepartmental Coordination for Housing
Municipal Affairs is taking a lead role in working with seven other ministries to more effectively coordinate the delivery and administration of housing. The other ministries involved are: Community Development; Family and Social Services; Health; Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs; Public Works, Supply and Services; Advanced Education and Career Development; and Justice.

Initiatives where Municipal Affairs plays a Supporting Role

Transportation and Utilities Road Study
Transportation and Utilities is undertaking a province-wide assessment of the rural road system that will examine its current condition, forecast its future state, and make recommendations based on the study. The Ministry is part of an advisory committee which has been established to develop the process of data collection, analysis and recommendations. This study will provide Transportation and Utilities with valuable information to examine program disentanglement.

Intensive Livestock Operations Review
Conflict exists among intensive livestock proponents and operators, neighbouring landowners, stakeholder organizations, and municipalities over the approval and operation of intensive livestock facilities. The regulatory framework for intensive livestock facilities is being reviewed by an interdepartmental committee chaired by Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Municipal Affairs, Health, and Environmental Protection are all participating in the review.

Flood Plain Development Review
In 1998, the Ministry prepared a study of planning and development controls related to flood plains. The Ministry is participating on an interdepartmental committee, chaired by Environmental Protection, which will work towards developing a comprehensive flood risk management strategy.

Long-Term Care Review
The Minister of Health formed an MLA steering committee to address four priority areas within the long-term care system in Alberta. The priority areas are home care, policies for health support programs, drug strategies and accommodation policies. Municipal Affairs is a member of the working committee together with Health and Regional Health Authorities. The Ministry is taking a lead role in looking at the administration of medication in lodges and supportive housing.

Protection for Persons in Care Act
The Ministry is working closely with Community Development and other ministries to review the procedures for investigating incidents of elderly abuse in facilities governed by the *Protection for Persons in Care Act.*

Homelessness
The Ministry will work with Family and Social Services and other ministries, municipal governments, local authorities, community groups and businesses to develop strategies to deal with homelessness.

Traffic Safety Initiative
On April 1, 1996, all Alberta road safety programs and relevant legislation were consolidated under Transportation and Utilities. Municipal Affairs retained ownership of the motor vehicle computer system and continues to provide many of the functions and services relating to motor vehicle registration. The Ministry is working with Transportation and Utilities to implement the necessary changes to the motor vehicle computer system to support the Traffic Safety Initiative being undertaken by that ministry.

Additional Products Available through Registries
Registries, through cooperative efforts with Energy, is developing a method to provide mineral lease information through Registries On-line and the Registry Agent network.

Payment of Fines
In order to fulfill its mandate of "one-stop shopping", Registries continues to work with other ministries to ensure as many services as possible are available through registry agents. Registries is actively working with Justice to make systems changes necessary to allow the payment of current fines for traffic offences through agent offices.

Ministry Core Businesses

Core Business #1 - Local Government Services

To ensure Public Confidence in Local Government

In today's rapidly changing environment, Albertans require dynamic, innovative and sustainable local governments that are responsive to the public, business, other levels of government, and each other. The Local Government Services Division listens to citizens and municipalities, and works to strengthen the contribution local governments make to the quality of life for Albertans. A positive business environment is promoted to encourage economic growth. By building on each other's strengths, our partnerships with other levels of government allow us to be efficient, accountable, fiscally responsible, and to advocate the role of local government.

The Local Government Services Division is committed to its mission of ensuring public confidence in local government. It will work to achieve this mission through the broad mandate of providing assessment standards, policy development, advisory support, and legislative improvements. Success in achieving this mission depends on four critical factors. First, assessment standards and enforcement measures will be enhanced to support a responsive and accountable tax system. Second, policies will be developed to advance improved local governance. Third, advisory and financial support will be provided to improve the operations and efficiency of municipalities. Fourth, the needs of Albertans will be balanced to ensure the adequacy and fairness of legislation.

The following principles will guide Municipal Affairs' relationship with municipalities and their residents. The Ministry supports public expectations that:

- all levels of government will work cooperatively to enhance the quality of life for Albertans
- municipal governments are responsible to their constituents for their actions and activities
- municipalities play a major role in providing the infrastructure and services required for a good quality of life and safe communities
- healthy, accountable and effective municipal governments are essential to meet local needs and preferences
- elected and appointed officials should strive to provide superior service by continually upgrading their skills and engaging in professional development
- the Ministry will identify, promote and support forms of local governance and regional initiatives that best facilitate the long-term prosperity and well-being of Albertans
- the Ministry will ensure that property assessments are consistent and equitable
- the Ministry will provide timely leadership and support.

Goal #1 Enhance the current property assessment system to ensure efficiency and uniformity

Albertans require a fair and stable property assessment system to ensure that properties in the province are assessed in an efficient and consistent manner. The Ministry will lead several strategies to strengthen the overall assessment process. Improvements to the system and its application will result in a better understanding of assessment and more accurate assessments.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Review the purpose, function, and need for an Equalization Review Board.	1999-2000
• Increase efforts to enforce assessment standards to ensure compliance.*	1999-2000
• Expand the international award-winning "best practices" manual to guide the profession in conducting assessments.*	1999-2002
• Develop an assessment audit handbook to ensure consistency of audits and to establish benchmarks for audits.*	1999-2000
• Develop options and implement recommendations for improving the efficiency and timeliness of the assessment appeal process.*	1999-2002
• Implement government-approved recommendations from MLA committees on farm and industrial assessment such as:*	
◦ conducting a farm property assessment impact study	1999-2001
◦ implementing a process for the continual update of regulated rates	1999-2000
◦ reviewing and implementing depreciation standards.	1999-2000
• Prepare accurate linear assessments by improving the system for appropriate adjustments to assessed property values.*	Ongoing
• Prepare equalized assessments within legislative time frames.*	Ongoing
• Audit the valuation of all provincially-owned properties to ensure the accuracy of Grants in Place of Taxes (GiPoT).*	Ongoing
• Enhance assessment standards and procedures and provide timely advice to ensure practices and methodologies are current.*	Ongoing

Performance Measures:

1) Percentage of municipal assessment rolls which meet the provincial standards for procedures, uniformity and equity.
2) Number of equalized assessments that are successfully appealed to the Municipal Government Board.
3) Client satisfaction survey on appropriateness, adequacy, timeliness, and quality of services provided (also applies to Goals #3 and #4).

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Goal #2 Provide leadership that ensures the provincial property tax policy system is responsive and accountable

Albertans' confidence in local government is associated with an acceptable property tax system. Most property taxpayers share in funding an education tax system which has reduced inequities among some taxpayers but created inconsistencies for others. The Ministry will provide the necessary leadership to ensure that all properties in the province are taxed in a consistent manner.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Encourage innovation that supports tax policies which are responsive to the changing needs of Albertans.*	Ongoing
• Prepare annual requisitions, forecast tax revenues, and develop education tax requisition policies in partnership with Treasury and Education.*	Ongoing
• Work together with Education on a communications plan to address public concerns, issues and requests for information regarding the Alberta School Foundation Fund.*	Ongoing

Performance Measure:

1) Client satisfaction with the accuracy, adequacy and appropriateness of services provided.

Goal #3 Provide effective leadership and support to encourage municipalities to meet Albertans' expectations of local government

Municipal governments must respond to the changing needs and expectations of their residents. The Ministry will assist municipalities by providing effective leadership and support. The Ministry's role is to identify and respond to emerging issues and new directions. Innovative program initiatives, such as the Municipal 2000 Sponsorship Program, will continue. The Ministry will adopt a wide range of strategies, from direct intervention to day-to-day advice, in ensuring municipal governments meet their obligations to their citizens.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Encourage effective and efficient local government by providing guidance on financial management issues and administering grant programs, for example:*	
◦ Municipal 2000 Sponsorship Program which targets limited-term assistance to specific municipal needs including promoting inter-municipal cooperation and innovative projects	1999-2002
◦ Unconditional Municipal Grant Program which provides ongoing financial assistance in support of municipal programs*	Ongoing
◦ Grants-in-Place-of-Taxes Program which provides grants in place of taxes on property owned by the province	Ongoing
◦ Municipal Debenture Interest Rebate Program which subsidizes the interest on certain borrowing from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation.	Ongoing

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Review the current municipal-provincial relationship to assist in the development of a renewed partnership that will ensure municipalities have the tools and flexibility to carry out their functions and to achieve excellence in local government.*	1999-2001
• Promote a smooth transition into the next millennium by encouraging municipalities to address Year 2000 issues.*	1999
• Assist citizens in the development of local government in national parks.*	1999-2002
• Implement the Excellence in Local Government Program to encourage and promote municipalities in pursuing excellence.*	Ongoing
• Develop and coordinate educational strategies for assessment professionals, municipal administrators, elected officials, and Municipal Affairs' staff. This includes:*	
◦ assessment review board training	1999-2000
◦ assessor competency training	1999-2002
◦ job exchange program	1999-2000
◦ "Muni-Mall", the virtual on-line community	Ongoing
◦ Assessment Valuation Steering Committee workshops.	Ongoing
• Provide municipal administration and management advice to local governments and citizens.*	Ongoing
• Support inter-municipal cooperation and self-directed dispute resolution through mediation and facilitation.*	Ongoing
• Provide assistance to municipalities and citizens engaged in developing innovative strategies for more effective governance, e.g. Alberta Capital Region Governance Review.*	Ongoing
• Encourage participation and communication with local governments by strengthening Albertans' knowledge and confidence in local government.*	Ongoing

Performance Measures:

1) Percentage of satisfied users of dispute resolution service.
2) Percentage of eligible municipalities participating in the grant programs.
3) Survey of Albertans' level of public confidence with local governments.

Goal #4 Provide effective legislation and processes to enhance the ability of municipalities to meet the needs of Albertans

Local governments try to balance the diverse interests of Albertans. The Ministry provides leadership in the establishment of an effective governance model and a legislative framework to enable municipalities to operate successfully. The Ministry will ensure appropriate decision-making processes are followed to protect the public interest.

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Recommend changes to improve legislation, where possible, in support of innovative approaches to governance, service delivery, and assessment.*	Ongoing
• Advocate improvement in the provision, coordination and delivery of programs, policies, and services by other government ministries, agencies and other stakeholders to support effective local government, e.g., Flood Plain Development Review, and Intensive Livestock Operations Review.*	Ongoing
• Develop measures of municipal performance that may be used by councils in reporting to their citizens.*	Ongoing
• Initiate reviews of municipalities in financial or organizational risk.*	Ongoing
• Promote improved intra-municipal complaint and dispute management procedures.*	Ongoing
• Respond to public requests for investigation and remedial action.*	Ongoing

Performance Measure:

1) Survey of stakeholders' satisfaction with the consultation process for changes to legislation and regulations.

Core Business #2 - Housing

To assist Albertans in need to access shelter in a safe and healthy environment

Albertans recognize that shelter is a basic need and that a caring society should help those persons who genuinely need support to improve their quality of life. Shelter is essential to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for Alberta's children. It is also a major component of the infrastructure required for economic growth.

One of the government's goals is to help those Albertans who are not able to support themselves fully. For many, this support will be temporary and will be combined with initiatives to allow them to become more self-sufficient. In support of this goal, Municipal Affairs will focus its energies and resources on those persons in need of assisted housing through partnerships with non-profit groups, management bodies, local governments, businesses and other government departments.

Alberta Housing Policy

A Housing Symposium was held in Edmonton on June 15 and 16, 1998, to address the impact of growth, an aging population, the growing number of people with special needs, the public's concerns about rising housing costs, and perceived barriers to private sector involvement in the development of low-income housing. The symposium brought the key stakeholders together to identify housing needs and obstacles, develop creative solutions and identify potential new partnerships. The ideas and suggestions from the symposium and the information from housing policy papers and reports prepared by municipalities and community organizations will be used by an interdepartmental committee to develop a housing policy.

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

The province's role in the delivery of housing and support services is changing. The challenge will be to strike the right balance between the province's fiscal resources and the needs of Albertans. In developing a new housing policy, the province will move:

- away from government owned and operated facilities; and
- toward housing visions created at the local level and community-based delivery of housing and support services;
- toward improved relationships between provincial ministries to create an effective framework of shelter and support programs which will assist communities to address their housing issues; and
- toward promoting partnerships between municipalities, non-profit groups, housing management bodies, local authorities, business and government.

The government will finalize the new housing policy once the interdepartmental committee has completed its review of the housing programs offered in Alberta.

Goal #1 Review and improve the provincial policy framework for providing housing and support services to needy Albertans

Albertans should have access to affordable shelter in a safe and healthy environment. However, each community has unique problems that require flexible solutions which may need the involvement of several ministries. The Ministry will work with other provincial departments, municipal governments, local authorities, community groups and businesses to develop solutions.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Enhance interdepartmental coordination of housing and support services to needy Albertans by:* • reviewing roles and responsibilities of those ministries involved in provincial housing assistance • reviewing with the respective ministries the methods of investigating complaints under the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* • developing initiatives to deal with housing/health issues arising from the Long-Term Care Review with Health • coordinating programs to provide adequate and safe shelter for children and services to persons with special needs with Family and Social Services • determining and preparing for the changing needs of an aging population with Community Development • reviewing the design standards for the Lodge Upgrading Program and conducting condition analyses on remaining lodges to determine if they should be part of the program with Public Works, Supply and Services • working with Advanced Education and Career Development to provide skills upgrading funding to increase self-reliance of social housing clients.	1999-2002

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Develop a new vision for seniors' subsidized housing to ensure that the provincial programs meet the needs of an aging population, including an evaluation of the Senior Citizens' Self-Contained Program.	1999-2001
• Develop a long-term strategy to address the homelessness issues in conjunction with other provincial departments, municipal governments, local authorities, community groups and businesses.	1999-2001
• Determine what role the private and non-profit sectors can play in the development of new social and affordable housing and encourage partnerships to create new housing units.	1999-2002
• Determine what other jurisdictions are doing to solve their housing problems and find innovative ways to fund new housing initiatives.*	1999-2002

Performance Measure:

1) Satisfaction of local communities and their residents with the affordability, appropriateness, adequacy and quality of the housing and support services in the community.

Goal #2 Enhance the effectiveness of the existing social housing portfolio

Albertans expect the funds spent on social housing to be used effectively. Local communities need the flexibility to develop solutions which meet the individual needs of their residents. The Ministry's role is to facilitate a simpler, more streamlined system and appropriate accountability measures which will allow local management groups to effectively operate their social housing portfolio.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Determine the requirements for providing ongoing housing advisory services to management bodies.	1999-2000
• Redefine the province's role in monitoring management bodies and determine the best way to implement the Auditor General's recommendation that management bodies set measurable expectations to allow comparison of actual results.	1999-2002
• Evaluate, in consultation with municipalities and management bodies, the future ownership of all provincially-owned social housing properties.*	2000-2002
• Identify options to change the funding for the existing portfolio, e.g., provide subsidies to individuals instead of housing units.	2000-2002
• Encourage and facilitate the establishment of regional housing planning committees to identify local housing needs and priorities and improve the effectiveness of the existing housing portfolio. Review the mandate and membership of the existing joint planning committees in Edmonton and Calgary.	1999-2000

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Performance Measure:

1) Percentage of management bodies whose clients are satisfied with the quality of their accommodation and, where appropriate, the services they receive.

Goal #3 Provide effective legislation and programs that meet the housing needs of Albertans

Albertans require housing legislation and programs which respond to their needs and can adapt to changing economic and social conditions in the province. The Ministry will collaborate with stakeholders to regularly evaluate and modify existing legislation, programs and policies.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Create more flexibility with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in order to carry out the new provincial housing policy.	1999-2000
• Implement the approved recommendations from the review of the Remote Housing Program.	1999-2000
• Provide housing assistance to targeted client groups through the Unique Homes Program, Home Adaptation Program and Housing Registry Program.	Ongoing
• Develop options to improve or replace the Rent Supplement Program in cooperation with private sector landlords and local governments.	1999-2001
• Implement the approved recommendations from the Lodge Assistance Program review.	1999-2000
• Review and update the *Alberta Housing Act* and regulations.	1999-2000
• Develop a grant program for qualifying non-profit seniors' housing facilities to replace the Grants-in-Place-of-Taxes.	1999-2001
• Improve the performance measures for the Housing and Consumer Affairs Division's goals.	1999-2000

Core Business #3 - Consumer Affairs

To promote a fair marketplace for Albertans

A marketplace where competition is fair and consumers are confident will create a dynamic environment for growth. Municipal Affairs will promote fair market practices, industry self management and effective service delivery. It will do this by ensuring an effective and efficient regulatory process is in place through legislation, monitoring of the marketplace, enforcement, and by enhancing consumer awareness and self-reliance.

Goal #1 Ensure a regulatory framework is in place to support a fair marketplace

Albertans recognize that a much more complex marketplace exists today than in the past. The existing legislation does not include provisions to deal with emerging issues such as negative option billing, time shares and electronic transactions. It needs to be modernized and harmonized with legislation in other

Canadian jurisdictions. The result will be an effective regulatory framework that supports a fair marketplace for Albertans. It will also contribute to ensuring Alberta remains a safe place to live and raise families.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Review and update consumer and other related legislation to address emerging consumer issues or in accordance with the department's legislative plan, e.g., the *Condominium Property Act* amendments. Ensure there are mechanisms in place for the effective administration and enforcement of the *Charitable Fund Raising Act*.	Ongoing

• Implement and explore additional regulatory changes to harmonize legislation and regulations with other jurisdictions, making it easier for consumers and businesses to operate in the national marketplace. Examples include:*
  • Cost of Credit Disclosure
  • Electronic Commerce.
	Ongoing

• Establish an Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council to assume responsibility for industry regulation including licensing, enforcement and education standards.*	1999-2000
• Conclude the consultation process and development of the *Fair Trading Act* regulations.	1999-2000
• Implement the *Fair Trading Act* by providing information and training for staff, stakeholders and the public.*	1999-2002
• Work with stakeholders to replace the current *Co-operative Associations Act* with a new Act that is consistent with the *Federal Co-operatives Act* and addresses issues raised by the co-operative sector and other provinces.	1999-2001
• The Charitable Fund Raising Advisory Committee will review and provide recommendations on issues that arise under the *Charitable Fund Raising Act*, including percentage-based compensation and the sunset review of the regulation.	1999-2001

Goal #2 Promote fair market practices through compliance to regulation

Albertans recognize the need to protect those least able to protect themselves such as seniors, persons with special needs, etc. The Ministry will focus its resources on the more significant areas where there is the greatest impact on Albertans. The Ministry will also work closely with other jurisdictions to strengthen Alberta's ability to enforce consumer legislation.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Improve monitoring and enforcement efforts through reciprocal agreements with other federal/provincial/territorial jurisdictions to standardize regulations, enabling enforcement across the country.*	Ongoing

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Investigate allegations of contraventions of legislation. Resources will be focused on the marketplace problems that affect the most vulnerable consumers.*	1999-2000
• The CANSHARE sub-committee, which Alberta co-chairs, will work on the key issues to operationalize the national information sharing database. This will include the development of the following four plans: implementation, business, enhancement and international information sharing.*	1999-2002

Goal #3 Improve marketplace awareness

Municipal Affairs will work in partnership with community-based groups, the private sector and other Canadian jurisdictions to enhance consumer awareness and self-reliance.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Provide advice and information to the public on legislation and other identified priorities.*	Ongoing
• Continue to partner with business associations to improve marketplace awareness. Examples include the Better Business Bureaus, the Alberta Auctioneers Association, etc.*	Ongoing
• Publish a regular enforcement bulletin to raise community awareness of consumer protection legislation, promote good business practices and highlight the enforcement role of the Ministry.*	2000-2001
• Host the next meeting of Ministers Responsible for Consumer Affairs to raise the profile of consumer protection programs in Alberta, and the profile of Alberta as a leader in working with industry and consumers.*	1999-2000
• Increase opportunities for Albertans to access information about consumer legislation and current consumer issues in order to enhance consumer awareness and self-reliance. Establish a consumer information center that uses advanced technology such as fax back, the Internet and an automated telephone information system to provide accurate, relevant information to Alberta consumers and businesses about legislation and current marketplace issues on a seven days a week, 24 hours a day basis.	1999-2000

Performance Measure:

1) A safe marketplace to do business for consumers and businesses. A survey of consumers and businesses will be undertaken, the results of which will be an indicator of how safe the Alberta marketplace is (applies to all three goals).

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Core Business #4 - Registries

Ensure continued excellence in the delivery of licensing, registration and information services to Albertans

Individuals and businesses benefit from improved access to Registries' products and services through innovative delivery systems. Municipal Affairs provides public and private sectors with secure, timely and high-quality information, registration, and licensing services at a competitive cost.

Goal #1 Provide a consistently high level of service across all registry areas

The provision of accessible, timely, accurate and secure information from Land Titles, Foreign Ownership of Land Administration, Corporate Registry, Vital Statistics, Motor Vehicles and Personal Property helps facilitate business transactions between Registries' service delivery partners and the public to improve business and individual decision making in the province. Service excellence is important and will be monitored by detailed performance standards and a comprehensive accountability framework.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Develop a comprehensive accountability framework, including performance standards and customer satisfaction assessments, to enhance the integrity of the service delivery processes.*	Ongoing
• Enhance policies and procedures to ensure that Registries' access to information standards reflect fair information practices.	1999-2000
• Implement administrative systems and processes to ensure the Foreign Ownership of Land Program is consistent with the intent of the legislation.	Ongoing .

Goal #2 Reinvest in technology to sustain revenues and system integrity

Registries has large computer systems that support the motor vehicles, land titles and personal property licensing and registration processes. These systems generate an important source of revenue for the government. In 1997-98, the gross revenue from the sale of products and services was $275.5 million. This represents a 21% increase from 1992-93. It is projected that the growth in transactions and the increase in revenue will continue, putting increased demands on the existing systems. These systems also play an important role in supporting law enforcement initiatives involving public safety and security, and other interdepartmental initiatives.

Registries needs to reinvest in its existing systems to protect this important source of revenue, enable law enforcement activities, and ensure the security and integrity of personal information. The Ministry needs to undertake a major restructuring of Registries' systems over the next five years. To redevelop the three mainframe application systems and keep pace with the rapidly changing marketplace and volume demands, Registries needs the ability and flexibility to finance the redevelopment of its systems.

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* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Explore private-sector partnerships to fund the re-engineering of the motor vehicles, land titles and personal property systems.	1999-2002
• Pursue leading edge redevelopment of the Alberta Land Titles System in a modular manner, pursuing partnership opportunities with other jurisdictions and specialized service providers with the intent of shared benefits and reduced costs. The first year of the business plan will focus on defining redevelopment, scope and funding options. Implementation should commence in the second year of the business plan and be phased in over five years.*	1999-2000 (Phase 1) 2000-2005 (Phase 2)
• Partner with Transportation and Utilities to develop a vision and redevelopment plan for a new Motor Vehicles system which would benefit both ministries. Implementation of the vision and redevelopment plan will take place in phase 2.*	1999-2000 (Phase 1) 2000-2005 (Phase 2)
• Investigate redevelopment approaches for the existing Personal Property Registration System including short-term improvements and longer-range possibilities.*	1999-2000
• Design a Foreign Ownership of Land administration system.*	1999-2000
• Modify the Corporate Registry and Vital Statistics systems to reflect feedback from service delivery partners (e.g., registry agents, law firms, Health) and the public.*	Ongoing

Goal #3 Partner with other ministries, jurisdictions and the private sector to promote innovative business opportunities

Registries has excelled in developing cooperative arrangements and partnerships with other government ministries, business organizations, and private and public sector groups. Ongoing strategies have been developed to build on our success and to expand the mutual benefits of these arrangements.

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Partner with Transportation and Utilities to determine, prioritize and implement the necessary changes to the Motor Vehicles System to support their Traffic Safety initiatives.*	Ongoing
• Complete the transition of Alberta On-Line to Internet access to facilitate a single point of electronic web-based access by subscribers to the Land Titles, Personal Property and Corporate Registry systems.*	1999-2000
• Partner with Energy to use both Registries On-Line and the Registry Agent network to provide access to crown land and mineral lease information.*	1999-2000
• Explore partnering opportunities to market our registration technology and information management system with other jurisdictions.	Ongoing
• Work with the survey community and other stakeholders to implement a digital plan registration process. This digital plan registration will significantly reduce the maintenance costs of the provincial mapping system.*	1999-2000

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Key Strategies	Time Frame
• Work with Justice to implement the *Contraventions Act*.*	1999-2000
• Continue partnership activities with Justice to ensure the payment of current fines through the registry agent network.*	1999-2000
• Continue to work with Health to ensure that only information required to confirm birth registrations is transmitted from Health to Vital Statistics.*	Ongoing
• Work with Treasury to investigate the feasibility of streamlining the corporate tax filing and annual return processes.*	Ongoing
• Consult with other provincial ministries and municipalities to develop a framework for reviewing and assessing Order-in-Council exemption requests from foreign companies for Intensive Livestock Operations and Agri-Forestry Operations.*	Ongoing

Performance Measures:

1) Customer satisfaction with the registration and licensing services provided by Registries and private sector partners which will include all delivery channels (applies to all three goals).
2) Comparison of Motor Vehicles registration and licensing fees with other Canadian jurisdictions to ensure that Alberta's fees remain competitive (applies to Goal #1).

Support Services

The Ministry's mandate includes responsibility for four very distinct core businesses, the activities of which are carried out by three operating divisions. Staff from five specialized areas including Finance and Administration, Human Resource Services, Communications, Corporate Services, and Legal Services, provide important support to the operating divisions in achieving their business plan goals and strategies. The Ministry is committed to ensuring good communications with its customers, partners and staff.

The staff are unique in Municipal Affairs in that they must be knowledgeable of several different areas and flexible enough that they can easily move from one area to another when the need arises. One of the priorities over the course of this three-year business plan is to maximize the flexibility of the Ministry's human resources by ensuring the knowledge, skills and abilities are in place to accomplish current and future business plan goals. Continuous learning and staff development are encouraged. This is even more important today to meet the day-to-day challenges of a growing economy which has placed increased demands on staff.

Some of the key department-wide initiatives that will be undertaken in this business plan are in the areas of human resource development and information systems. They include:

* *Denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations*

Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy

A Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy is being implemented across government in response to the Growth Summit recommendations. It is intended to address issues such as the overall aging of the public service, stiff competition for scarce resources and rapidly changing skill needs. As part of our Human Resources Plan, the Ministry will undertake initiatives that will achieve the strategic intent of this government-wide strategy. This will include initiatives in the areas of corporate learning, leadership development and recruitment.

A comprehensive long-range succession plan that will target all areas within the Ministry will also be undertaken. One of the first areas to be targeted will be the Registries Division which will implement this plan in 1999-2000. Strategies have been developed for Registries to address this area of risk and reduce the potential impact on service delivery, performance and accountability standards. They include:

- exploring the use of interns in Land Titles
- partnering with the Personnel Administration Office to take advantage of overall government recruitment and succession planning strategies such as targeted advertising and recruitment strategies
- exploring linkages with training institutes.

Information Systems

The Ministry will continue to develop its information systems to support its core businesses. A solid infrastructure, robust external communications capability and current applications are necessary to ensure the Ministry can successfully meet its goals. Two aspects are of particular importance. The first is the need to reinvest in Registries' legacy computer systems to ensure the Ministry's ability to continue to support government's objectives for public safety and security and revenue. The second is the need to continue to improve communication with municipalities and other customers through activities like the "Let's Get Wired" project - a project to expand direct connection and the sharing of electronic information.

Regulatory Reform

The Ministry's regulatory sunset plan outlines a number of regulations that are scheduled for review from 1999 to 2001. The result will be a reduction in the number of regulations the Ministry administers, and more effective regulation where it is needed. This will contribute to the government's goal to eliminate all unnecessary regulation. The Ministry is committed to reviewing the remaining regulations on an ongoing basis.

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
MINISTRY INCOME STATEMENT
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1997-98 Actual	Comparable 1998-99 Budget	Comparable 1998-99 Forecast	1999-2000 Estimates	2000-01 Target	2001-02 Target
REVENUE						
Internal Government Transfers	-	-	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Transfers from Government of Canada	65,597	67,975	65,800	64,950	63,900	63,900
Investment Income	4,259	3,100	3,104	1,730	1,350	1,300
Premiums, Fees and Licences	275,573	251,098	279,183	283,504	289,037	294,688
Other Revenue	32,900	9,432	14,031	9,555	9,555	9,555
MINISTRY REVENUE	378,329	331,605	371,918	369,739	373,842	379,443
EXPENSE						
Program						
Department						
Ministry Support Services	13,835	13,310	13,213	13,548	13,759	14,266
Municipal Programs	120,516	114,533	118,932	114,031	114,138	114,783
Housing Services	9,378	8,887	8,822	9,512	9,552	9,895
Consumer Services	5,244	5,739	6,810	5,856	5,944	6,313
Registries Information and Distribution	37,398	34,158	37,282	34,013	34,453	35,441
Municipal Government Board	1,900	1,927	2,029	1,936	1,950	2,025
Department Sub-total	188,271	178,554	187,088	178,896	179,796	182,723
Statutory Programs and Valuation Adjustments	(7,891)	3,100	1,310	2,255	1,600	1,400
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	68,387	63,072	65,682	74,985	64,653	64,853
Program Expense	248,967	244,726	254,080	256,136	246,049	248,976
Debt Servicing Costs	100,328	75,554	73,669	60,000	55,200	49,750
MINISTRY EXPENSE	349,295	320,280	327,749	316,136	301,249	298,726
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(496)	-	-	2,366	-	-
Gain (Loss) on Inventory held for Resale	(611)	1,600	2,500	37,918	-	-
MINISTRY NET OPERATING RESULT	27,927	12,925	46,669	93,887	72,593	80,717

CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1997-98 Actual	Comparable 1998-99 Budget	Comparable 1998-99 Forecast	1999-2000 Estimates	2000-01 Target	2001-02 Target
Ministry Revenue	378,329	331,605	371,918	369,739	373,842	379,443
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	(197)	(182)	(10,181)	(10,170)	(10,166)	(10,162)
Consolidated Revenue	378,132	331,423	361,737	359,569	363,676	369,281
Ministry Program Expense	248,967	244,726	254,080	256,136	246,049	248,976
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	(10,187)	-	-
Consolidated Program Expense	248,967	244,726	254,080	245,949	246,049	248,976
Ministry Debt Servicing Costs	100,328	75,554	73,669	60,000	55,200	49,750
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	(89,814)	(65,825)	(63,678)	(51,400)	(46,650)	(41,300)
Consolidated Debt Servicing Costs	10,514	9,729	9,991	8,600	8,550	8,450
Consolidated Expense	259,481	254,455	264,071	254,549	254,599	257,426
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(496)	-	-	2,366	-	-
Gain (Loss) on Inventory held for Resale	(611)	1,600	2,500	37,918	-	-
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	(10,187)	-	-
CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT	117,544	78,568	100,166	135,117	109,077	111,855